



Central Basin

Municipal Water District

September 21, 2009

Lester Snow
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Subject: Request for Reconsideration of the RAP Denial of the LA Gateway IRWM JPA Authority (Gateway Authority)

Board of Directors

Division I

Edward C. Vasquez

Division II

Robert Apodaca

Division III

Arturo Chacon

Division IV

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Dear Director Snow:

The Central Basin Municipal Water District (Central Basin) is surprised and very disappointed that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has preliminarily denied the Gateway Authority's status as a Regional Water Management Group (RWMG). As you know, the 27 cities in the Gateway Region represent over 2.1 million Californians. We believe that the Gateway Authority meets all of the criteria set forth in the Regional Acceptance Process (RAP) Guidelines and are requesting that you reconsider and reverse the tentative decision to deny RWMG status to the Gateway Region.

General Manager

Art Aguilar

Central Basin is very concerned that the decision by DWR does not appear to be based on any regulation or legislation. There appears to be no substantive argument for denying the Gateway Authority's application, as evidenced by the dismissive summary given by DWR staff:

Serving the Cities of

"...the rationale for forming a separate IRWM Region, exclusive of the GLAC IRWM Region, is not compelling. Therefore, DWR does not approve the Gateway Region."

Artesia	La Mirada
Bell	Lynwood
Bellflower	Maywood
Bell Gardens	Montebello
Carson	Monterey Park
Cerritos	Norwalk
Commerce	Paramount
Compton	Pico Rivera
Cudahy	Santa Fe Springs
Downey	Signal Hill
East Los Angeles	South Gate
Florence-Graham	Walnut Park
Hawaiian Gardens	Whittier
Huntington Park	Willowbrook
La Habra Heights	Vernon
Lakewood	

The DWR staff implication is that there is overlap with the Greater Los Angeles County (GLAC) group. The locally elected officials, as members of the board of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, specifically mandated the formation of the Gateway Authority to address the integrated regional water planning needs of Southeast Los Angeles County. Only the Gateway Authority has the sanction of the 27 Gateway Cities. These cities purposefully and collectively did not sign the current GLAC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). None of the cities in this region have consented to regional water management representation by any other agency.

Neglect of Gateway Region

There is a historic and well-documented neglect of the Gateway Region by the larger County planning efforts in a multitude of so called "regional plans," including an historic lack of receiving a fair share of the Gateway Region's transportation funding through the Metropolitan Transportation Authority based on contribution of funds. Though DWR acknowledges that the Gateway Region will be under represented in the GLAC Region, staff has not proposed a remedy for this entrenched problem of under representation. In fact, the approval of the GLAC region by DWR will further exacerbate the funding inequities that have severely impacted our region for decades. It is important to note that the Greater Los Angeles Region would be 2,058 square miles in size, consisting of 83 cities and multiple other agencies, which is too large to be an effective planning unit.

The Gateway Region makes a compelling regional economic development case for forming its own RWMG, in order to better direct water infrastructure investments in Southeast Los Angeles County. The Gateway region has suffered from chronic unemployment for the last decade. Currently, the local city unemployment rates (July 2009) are among the highest in all of California. Fifteen of the areas 27 cities have unemployment rates greater than the State rate of 12.2% and the Los Angeles County rate of 12.5%. The average unemployment rate in the Gateway area is 13.4%, with the City of Commerce at 21.8%, Compton at 20.9%, Bell Gardens at 19.6%, Lynwood at 19.5%, Huntington Park and Paramount at 18%. There are over 33,200 persons unemployed in the City of Long Beach alone. The County of Los Angeles has been unable to devote sufficient resources to the Gateway Region to solve this state of chronic unemployment.

Splitting off RWMG's

It is also important to note that the DWR staff is already recommending splitting Ventura and Los Angeles County from each other, as well as splitting Los Angeles County between the Antelope Valley and the GLAC group. DWR staff has also recommended splitting Orange County into three groups. Kern County will be divided into four groups and greater Sacramento area is split into ten groups. Many of these planning groups are smaller in size and have less population than the Gateway Region.

Gateway's Effective Governance

In addition to satisfying all of the requirements for being a RWMG, the Gateway Authority has a successful track record of effective governance and integrated planning for regional water needs. The Gateway Authority secured a \$10 million grant from the State Water Resources Control Board to improve water quality in the Los Angeles River and is administering a Metals TMDL monitoring and implementation plan in the San Gabriel River, funded by member agencies.

We recognize that you look for evidence of a region's collaborative efforts in context with adjacent regions, i.e., how well the work is coordinated, the degree of integration, and the development of a vision. Because Gateway Authority has not yet gone through the planning effort with respect to adopting a plan, their actions speak for themselves, and we believe that the Gateway Authority has demonstrated its ability to cooperate and be inclusive. The Gateway Authority brought nine cities into the grant project that were not members of the JPA, but needed help.

Conclusion

To equitably address regional water needs, it is imperative that the Gateway Region maintain strong local leadership in water management issues. We request that you reconsider and reverse the preliminary decision to deny the Gateway Authority's RWMG status consistent with the intent and purpose of Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) legislation and acknowledge the qualifications of the Gateway Authority as a Regional Water Management Group.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 201-5505 or by email at arta@centralbasin.org.

Sincerely,



Art Aguilar
General Manager

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cc: Central Basin MWD Board of Directors
Annette Hubbell, Executive Officer, Los Angeles Gateway Region